

Almost 20 years after its first appearance, the literary legend that is "Dune" has finally been brought to the screen.

First published in 1965, the mystique of Frank Herbert's science-fiction classic quickly expanded with the publication of three sequels all of which, including the original, were translated into 14 languages. A fifth book, "Heretics of Dune" was published earlier this year. The cult which has since sprung up following the worldwide popularity of the "Dune" series continues to grow. As such, the film has become a long-awaited event.

Sprawling across four different planets — military, industrial, earthy and dignified — the story tells of a young hero named Paul Atreides, who struggles to free the universe from evil.

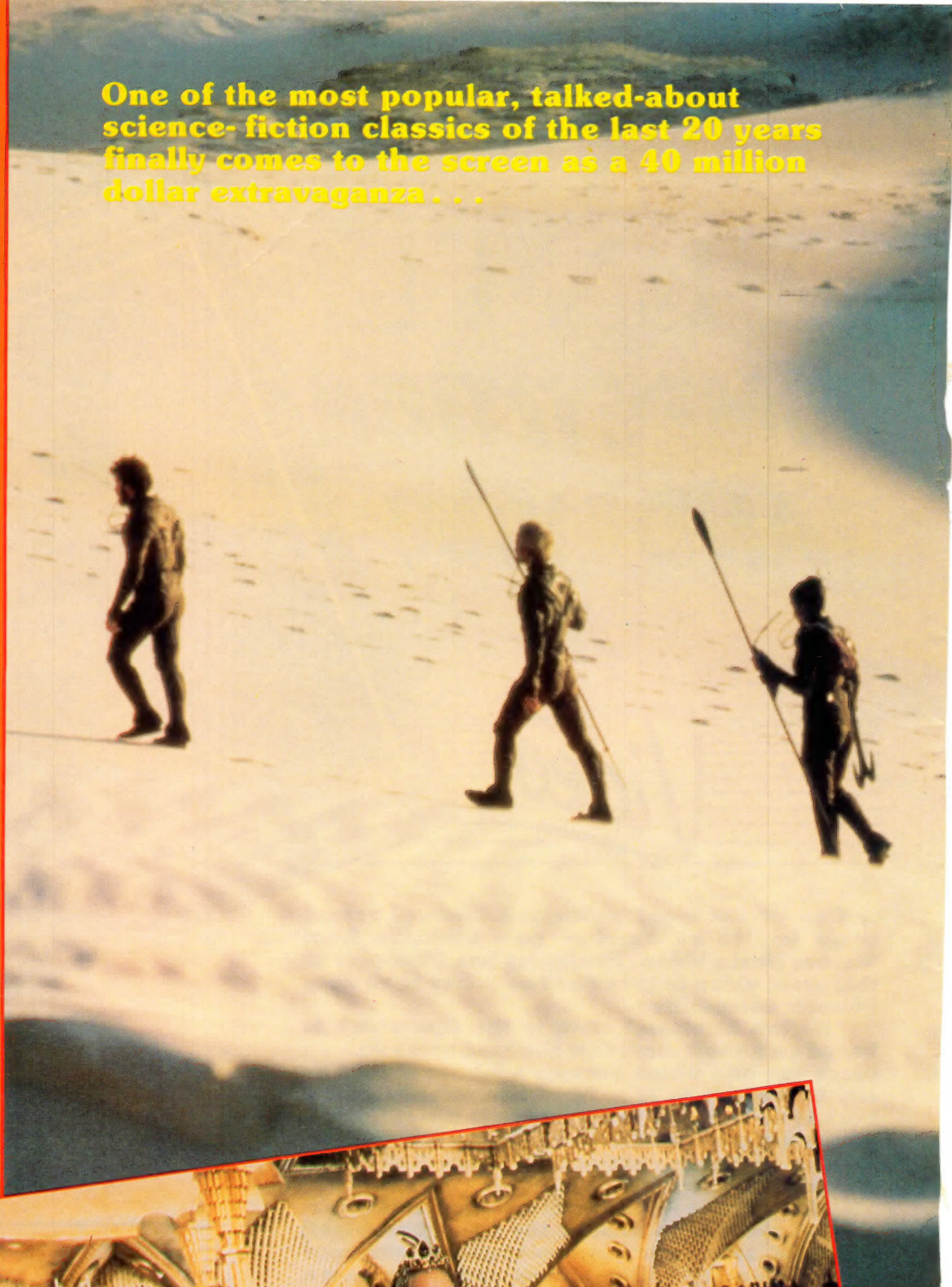
Much of the action takes place on the water-starved world of Arrakis — otherwise known as Dune — where Atreides unites with the primitive Fremen and their army of giant sandworms in their fight against the scheming Emperor Padishah. *Dune* also tells the story of a planet driven to the brink of economic and ecological ruin by the cut-throat mining of an addictive, life-prolonging spice called Melange.

Filmed on striking locations throughout Mexico, an impressive team of special effects technicians were brought together to create *Dune* and its strange worlds, exotic people, surreal technology and awesome creatures.

Among the numerous mechanical special effects featured, is the fighter robot against which Paul Atreides practices the art of combat. Six operators were required to manage the robot, which rotates and moves back and forth while spears, blades and other weapons fly in and out.

Carlo Rambaldi, famous for creating E.T. and King Kong, claims he delved into "unchartered territory" in his designs for the sandworms. It

One of the most popular, talked-about science-fiction classics of the last 20 years finally comes to the screen as a 40 million dollar extravaganza...



DUNE



(Above) Primitive Fremen make a trek across the water-starved dunes of the planet Arrakis; (left) Virginia Madsen, as Princess Irulan, pictured in the Great Hall — a lavish set inspired by a cathedral in Venice; (right) Sting as the wicked warrior and heir designate, Feyd



took a total of 15 people (sculptors, mould-makers and mechanics) seven months to produce 16 worms, each of which had to be operated by a team of six men during filming. Rambaldi's Spacing Guild Navigator was somewhat easier to create than the worms, but even so it required 22 operators to handle its 40 different movements.

Dino De Laurentiis acquired the film rights to *Dune* in 1980, but when he disagreed with Ridley Scott's view of how the book should be interpreted on film, he later signed David Lynch (whose previous success was *The Elephant Man*) as writer-director. After reading the novel, Lynch admitted to being "knocked out" by it.

"*Dune* is an adventure story on the surface, but it's also a novel of emotional and physical texture. I love strange ideas, and *Dune* is filled with them — visions and prophecies, dreams and abstractions.

Believable

"I also like going in to weird worlds, and *Dune* has a bunch of those, too. I was particularly excited because it's all tied in with believable characters, not just the mannequins you find in so many science-fiction stories."

As for deciding how to meet the expectations of the 30 or so million people around the world who had read the novel, Lynch remarked: "I decided not to worry about it, since whatever I did was going to clash with someone's interpretation."

As regards the problem of condensing the massive book into a 2-hour movie, the director said: "All I could do was follow my instincts and save those aspects of the story and characters that really said *Dune*."

According to at least one source, Lynch and his instincts are right on target. That source is the author of the novel, Frank Herbert, who commented enthusiastically: "What you'll see on the screen is *Dune*."

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